

## Beyond the Frontier

A Romance of the Western Wilderness  
and of Two Eighteenth Century Lovers

By Randall Parrish

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SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Adèle is a Cheyenne girl who tells the story. She is a Cheyenne girl, living with her uncle, Hugué, in the wilderness. She is a Cheyenne girl, living with her uncle, Hugué, in the wilderness. She is a Cheyenne girl, living with her uncle, Hugué, in the wilderness.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## Warriors of the Illini.

"ES, M. de la Forest," I said, stepping forward to give him a question which would embarrass him. "I am the daughter of Capt. de Chesnay, whom the Illini have taken under their protection." We told him our story, and he told us in return of the Tadians massing to attack the fort.

"What Indians have you?" asked de Artigny.

"Illini, mostly, with a handful of Miami and Kickapoo. We met them at the crossing, hiding in the hills. They were badly demoralized, and filled with horror at what they had seen, yet agreed to return here under my leadership."

"Who is their chief?"

"Old Sequitah—you know him?"

"Aye, a real warrior. The better than I dare hope, for I have been in battle with him before. Do you number a hundred?"

"And fifty more, though I am not armed. Never have I seen the Illini in action. De Artigny: they seem to me a poor lot, so frightened of the wolves as to be valueless."

"So they are left to themselves, under white leadership they are?"

"You perhaps have some plan of attack? Let us hear it."

"Then listen, I have thought this out. You and I, with Sequitah, will take a hundred of your Indians, cross the small river, and advance up the trail. That leaves fifty warriors to creep through the woods on the slope, twenty-five to a side, led by your two *coureurs de bois*. We will wait at the great rock, and give the signal."

"I shall go with you, Messieurs," I said quietly. "There will be no more danger than here; besides, you would not leave me alone without a guard and you will need every fighting man."

"There was no time lost, although I knew but little of what occurred, being left alone with the Illini. De Artigny and I, with Sequitah, arranged the plans of advance."

"It was like a dream rather than a reality. I was conscious of no thrill, no sense of fear. It was as though I viewed a picture in which I had no personal interest. Out of the darkness came de Artigny, pausing an instant before he spoke."

"All is well, Sequitah."

"Good—is as the white chief wishes."

"Then we move at once," La Forest said. "You and I will lead the rear; you and I will lead the rear; you and I will lead the rear."

"He turned and took my hand."

"You will walk with me, dear one; you are not afraid?"

"Not of the peril of coming battle," I answered. "I think I hardly realize what is about to happen. The Illini are here. If you win, you will be a prisoner condemned to death."

"He laughed and bent low, so I felt his lips brush my cheek."

"You do not understand, dear girl. A moment and I will explain—now we are beyond all stream. Now I must see that all move together."

## CHAPTER XXII.

## We Wait in Ambush.

WE advanced through the woods down a slight incline, the Indians moving like so many phantoms. Not a branch rattled as they glided silently forward, not a leaf rustled beneath the soft tread of moccasined feet. De Artigny led me by the hand, aiding me to move quickly over the uneven ground, but made no effort to speak. Beside us, not unlike a shadow, strode the Chief Sequitah, his stern face uplifted, shadowed by long black hair, a rifle gripped in his sinewy arm.

"We crossed the little river, de Artigny bearing me easily in his grasp, and on the opposite shore, waited for the others to follow. They came, a long line of dark shadowy forms, wading cautiously through the shallow water, and ranged themselves just below the bank, many still standing in the stream. When light then we flickered over naked bodies and revealed savage eyes gleaming from out masses of black hair."

De Artigny stepped forward on the exposed root of a tree to where he could see his dusky followers, and La Forest climbed the bank, and joined him. A moment the two men conferred, turning about to question Sequitah. As they separated I could distinguish de Artigny's final words.

"Very well, then, if it is your wish, I take command. Sequitah, a hundred warriors will follow you along the trail—you know it well. Make your best shots in advance, and circle your braves as to make attack impossible. Your shots will not go beyond the great rock except on my order. M. de la Forest will accompany them. This is clear?"

The Indian nodded resolutely in his own tongue; then spoke more slowly and the mass of warriors below changed formation, the great number climbing the bank and grouping themselves in the darker shadow of the rocks.

"Who has charge of the others?" asked de Artigny.

"Hastian Courtray," replied La Forest. "He is yours."

"Then Courtray, listen! You follow the stream, but do not venture from cover. Post your men below the stockade and wait to intercept fugitives. We will do the fighting above. Are the warriors with you armed?"

"All but ten have rifles, Monsieur, but I know not if they be of value."

"You must make the best of them, you can. Above all things, be quiet, and do nothing to alarm the Illinoquois. You may go."

I leaned forward watching them as they waded down stream, and then climbed the bank, disappearing in the undergrowth. Sequitah had moved past me, and I heard his voice speaking in Illini dialect. Along the forest sides his warriors glided by where I stood, noiselessly as shadows. In another moment de Artigny and I were alone, the black night all about us, and not a sound reaching our ears, tell of those vanished allies. He took my hand, a caress in his touch, a suggestion of pride in his voice.

"The old chief is warrior still," he said, "and I shall remember this day. Come, Adele, 'twill not do for us to be far behind, and we have walked this trail before together."

Had I not tested it with my own ears never would I have believed a hundred men could have made way so noiselessly in the dark, through such thick forest, rock strewn and deeply rutted. Yet not a sound of their stealthy passage was wafted back to us on the wind—no echo of foot, no rasping of foot, no rustle of leaves. Ghosts could not have moved more silently.

I clung to de Artigny's arm, shrinking from the shadows, my mind filled with anxious fears.

"Adele," he whispered, tenderly, "you still fear for me in this venture?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"There is no need. You heard La Forest say he bore orders of the King which gave de Tonty command once more of Fort St. Louis."

"Yes, Monsieur, but you have already been tried and condemned. Even if they have not authority to shoot you, they have power to transport to Quebec."

"There would be battle first, if I know my old comrades well. No, as to that there is no cause to fear. I shall be given fair trial now, and well as I believe the case will cost him the vengeance of Cassion, if ever you came within his grasp again. But that also is settled."

"Settled? What is it you would tell me?"

"This, sweetheart: you should know, although I would that some other might tell you. La Forest whispered to me while we were alone, ordered for he knew not you were estranged from your husband. He bears with him the King's order for the arrest of M. Cassion, Capt. de Baugis is commissioned by La Barre to return him safely to Quebec for trial."

"On what charge?"

"Treason to France: the giving of false testimony against a King's officer and the concealing of official records."

"Mon Dieu! Was it the case of my father?"

"Yes, the truth has been made clear. There is as I understand from what La Forest told me not sufficient evidence against La Barre to convict, yet he believed the case would cost him his office. But M. Cassion was his agent, and is guilty beyond a doubt."

"But, Monsieur, who made the charge?"

"The Comte de Frontenac; he was your father's friend, and won him restoration of his property. Not until La Forest's arrest with his own hands was the charge of the wrong done to de Chesnay. Later he had converse with La Salle, a Franciscan once stationed at Montreal, and two officers ordered to arrest him, and he was taken to the prison. He was taken to the prison. He was taken to the prison."

"The Governor knows?"

"Not yet. La Forest felt it best to keep the secret, fearing he might be detained possibly ambushed on the way home."

I cannot describe my feelings—joy, sorrow, memory of the past, overwhelming me. Tears were wet with my cheeks, and I could find no words. De Artigny seemed to understand, yet he made no effort to speak, merely holding me close with his strong arm.

Suddenly before us loomed the shadow of the great rock, which rose a mighty barrier across the trail, its crest outlined against the sky. The Indians had halted here, and we pressed forward, the chief and I, and we came to where the chief and La Forest waited. There was a growing light of light in the eastern sky, enabling us to perceive each other's faces. All was tense, expectant, the Indians scarcely venturing to breathe, the two white men conversing in whispers. Sequitah's lips tightly closed, his attitude a lip tightly closed.

"Your scouts ventured no further," questioned de Artigny.

"No," was not safe, the man scaled the rock, and reports the Illinoquois just beyond."

"They hide in covert where I suspected them; but I would see with my own eyes. These warriors here, as I remember, to give foothold. Aye, here it is, an easy passage enough. Come, La Forest, a glance ahead will make your plan clear."

The two clambered up noiselessly, and outstretched themselves on the flat surface above. The dawn brightened, almost imperceptibly, so I could not see them. They were on either side, some standing, some squatting on the grass, all motionless, but alert, their weapons gleaming, their eyes fixed on the distant light.

La Forest descended cautiously, and touched the arm of the chief.

"You see?"

"Sequitah shook his head."

"Sequitah know now; he has seen me. We do what white chief says?"

La Forest turned toward me.

"And you, Madame, de Artigny will lead you to the fort."

Surprised at the request, I rested my foot on his hand, and crept forward along the smooth surface until I lay beside him. He glanced aside into my face.

"Do not lift your head," he whispered. "Peer through this cleft in the rock."

Before us was a narrow opening, devoid of vegetation, a sterile patch of stone and sand, and beyond this a fringe of trees, matted with under-

## Tough Luck

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By Maurice Ketten

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